



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

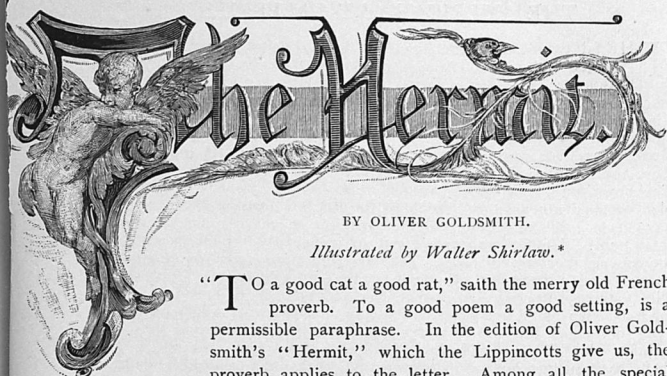
This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

*Illustrated by Waller Shirlaw.**

"To a good cat a good rat," saith the merry old French proverb. To a good poem a good setting, is a permissible paraphrase. In the edition of Oliver Goldsmith's "Hermit," which the Lippincotts give us, the proverb applies to the letter. Among all the special

works the holiday season has called into existence in this country, since holiday books first became a fashion, none touches this one in artistic quality or in the completeness of its execution. To do justice to "The Hermit" of Mr. Shirlaw would require the publication of every one of the twenty-four designs he has contributed to it, for their variety is equivalent to their number. In presenting, through the courtesy of the publishers, the three examples which we do, we give but a hint of what should, in its entirety, prove a rare gift to every reader of the ART UNION.

We possess, in Mr. Shirlaw, undoubtedly the most masterly artist in the loftier field of decorative art in America. The subtle sensitiveness to the most exquisite combination and balance of design, and the almost instinctive feeling for grace of form and grace in the assemblage and application of form, which constitute a great artist in the highest walk of art, are perceptible even in the least significant productions of his hand. In many of his compositions for "The Hermit" his art exhibits itself in the completest development possible to the subject and the compass to which it is restricted. Certain of the originals of these designs, painted on a moderate scale in black and white, are veritable gems.

The drawings may be generally divided into two classes: the compositions illustrating the poem, and the purely decorative designs applied as head pieces, finials and initials. But in the case of the more important illustrations, the decorative idea is carried out in the borders, which are in every instance made symbolical of the lines illustrated, and with wonderful completeness and delicacy of treatment also contrived to carry out and give rounded finish to the actual composition which they frame. At first glance these drawings make a suggestion of the noble compositions woven in antique tapestry, whose dignity of color they possess, but with a grace of composition and of line entirely their own, or rather their creators. But as one studies them one traces through them a vital spirit of allegory, carried from the lines which inspired them into the pictures themselves, and from them melting into the environing framework, where the sentiment of the delightful conceit of the poet is reflected in suggestions as tender and complete as his own simple and graceful verse.

The minor designs—which are only so in the sense that they supply a decorative finish to the pages rather than constitute essential elements in the illustration of the work—are equally intimate in their application to the text and in its elucidation. Not one has been created for the mere purpose of embellishment. Every one is part of the poem, completing in itself the work of the poet. To describe the volume as briefly as it can be described, its first impression is one of striking beauty, from the standpoint of pure illustration; its final and permanent one is of astounding sympathy between an artist who lives and a poet who is immortal, a species of transmigration of the poetic into the artistic soul, so rarely found as to be almost unique. The most splendid of these splendid monographs which our generation has produced is usually an illustrated book, whose pictures may be suggested by the text, but add nothing to it. In this instance we have a work in which the artist has completed what the poet began, and given it something he left it barren of—a definite vitality.

The execution of Mr. Shirlaw's designs, which are engraved on wood, has been confided to Frederick Juengling, an artist of whose rare ability

the ART UNION has had occasion to speak already in terms of amply merited commendation. In his present labor Mr. Juengling has excelled himself. Higher praise would savor of flattery.

WILLIAM PAGE.

WILLIAM PAGE was born at Albany, New York, on January 23d, 1811. After some small schooling he was, at the age of fourteen, placed in a lawyer's office. But he had previously shown an inclination for art, and already had had a prize given him by the American Institute for a drawing in Indian ink. Fortunately the lawyer, Mr. de Peyster, was President of the New York Academy of the Fine Arts, and so in some measure prepared to understand the artist tendency of the boy. He showed the lad's drawings to Trumbull, who is reported to have said, after learning that the lad had brains—"Tell him to stick to law," as the better paying occupation. The usual advice, under such circumstances, had its usual reception. Genius takes its own course, careless of worldly prudential reasons, undeterred by even the records of unsuccess. Page gave up the promise of a prosperous career and entered on the path of fame. For a time he learned what he could in the service of an obscure portrait painter named Herring, and then had the advantage of lessons from Morse, the inventor of the electro-telegraph and first President of the new National Academy of Design. As student there Page, in his seventeenth year, obtained for his drawing the silver medal, the first prize given by the Academy. Soon after this, his religious feelings disposing him to become a minister, he began to study with that end in view, first at Andover, then at Amherst, supporting himself by painting miniatures; but unable to confine his mind within the bounds of prevalent orthodoxy, probably also the sense of his higher calling strong upon him, he had to abandon the priestly intention, and resumed his artistic destiny, taking a studio at Albany and rapidly rising into good repute. Thence removing to New York, he was elected a member of the Academy (of which he afterwards was sometime President) and won a high position both as a colorist and for the faithfulness of his portraits, his work, however, not absolutely confined to portraiture. From New York he removed to Boston, painting there for several years, up to 1847, when he returned to New York, remaining till 1849, in which year he went to Europe. Eleven years were spent in Rome, Venice and Florence, and in 1859-60 he came back to America. For four or five years he lived at Englewood, New Jersey. Since then his home has been on Staten Island, near to Tottenville, though his working life was at the studio in New York City. Seven years ago, stricken with paralysis, he was disabled from following his art, since suffering all the sadness of compelled inaction (though with loving care from wife and children). He died at Staten Island on September 30th.

Such are the simple biographical facts. The list of his paintings I cannot fully give. Of what may be called his inventive works, the most important are his "Venus," "Moses on Mount Horeb," a "Flight into Egypt," the "Antique Timbrel Player," an "Infant Bacchus," his portrait (which was something more than a portrait) of "Admiral Farragut," a head of "Christ," and a full length figure of "Shakspeare." Of portraits may be mentioned some of many, Governor Marcy, John Quincy Adams, Josiah Quincy, Mrs. Crawford (the wife of the sculptor), Lowell, Wendell Phillips, Colonel Shaw, Ward Beecher, Tilton, Moulton, Miss Cushman, Browning (not named here in any order), all excellent in character and admirably painted. Best of all his portraits, perhaps, are two three-quarter length figures, life size, painted at Rome, of himself and wife, portraits that in all the higher qualities of art, may fairly rank with even those of Titian, of whom Page was an enthusiastic admirer. His last work was in sculpture, a life-size head of "Shakspeare."

I must leave abler pens than my own to point out his special excellencies as a painter, and to speak of his work with fairly appreciative criticism. One thing I may not hesitate to say. He was never content with only pigments; he mixed his colors with brains, his drawing had always thought behind it. He never painted only to produce a passing impression or provoke a foolish popularity. His art was to him a religion, to be approached with reverence, to be worshipped with careful conscientiousness. Where he failed, from some lack it may be of pictorial invention, his failures were yet above the successes of other men. His "Shakspeare" (either picture or sculpture) may not satisfy every one; his "Christ" may displease and be objected to; but when criticism has gone through his works, the qualified critic (a painter, that is) will own that he stands highest among American painters, and recognize that his influence has been great and beneficial upon American art. I think I am not speaking only of my own impression, but that I express the feeling of most of his contemporaries. If the outside voice does not assent to this, it is because he never cared to paint to please the carelessness of ignorance. The future will do him justice. His best pictures will be valued in coming days.

Of the man I am better qualified to speak. I may refer to Lowell's love for him; a love always fervently reciprocated by Page. Lowell's dedication of his poems to him forty years ago, speaks finely of their early friendship. And many are the artists who can tell of his ready and kindest helpfulness upon all occasions. Large-hearted, generous, of most religious, or (more exactly to express what I would intend by that word) most reverential nature, a poet in his soul, not without utterance of that in the imaginative portion of painting, he stood not only high among artists, but

* Published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia.

